

least some amount of alloy. And it was exactly this contamination of the 'gold' that I wanted to spotlight in my review.

G. ZORAB

A correction

SIR,—I much regret that in the last line of my reply to Mr Garnett on p. 251 of the March *Journal* the two times 17.2 seconds and 3.23 seconds were copied down wrongly. Actually these figures were the average time for 24 movements of the experimenter's hand from the screen aperture to the bowl, and the standard deviation of this average. For a *single* movement, the first time has to be divided by 24 giving an average time of 0.71 seconds. The standard error of this mean now works out to 0.09 seconds; 24 is, of course, the number of time-intervals which elapse during the presentation of the 25 counters.

S. G. SOAL

*Cae Garw,
Betws-y-Coed,
Caerns*

The Fawcett Scripts

SIR,—In the *Journal* for March, 1966, Mr Simeon Edmunds pinpoints some striking parallels between passages in Miss Geraldine Cummins' automatic scripts, which purport to come from the surviving Colonel Fawcett, and others written by Colonel Fawcett himself before his death. He also lists various possible sources, including subconscious memory, for automatic scripts in general, commenting wisely that 'few who argue about them appear completely objective in their attitudes.' Some of his further comments, however, emphasize a difficulty which often crops up in psychical research. Like Mr Edmunds we all seek to be objective, to take in the whole picture. But how are we to tell when we have failed?

Some degree of failure may be almost inevitable, seeing how profoundly the mentality of most investigators differs from that of most sensitives. The first is usually rational, 'sunlit', given and trained to analysis and verbal thinking, often with an admirable conscious memory but lacking in personal ESP-type experience. The second is initiative, synthetic, 'moonlit', given to image thinking, with sometimes a weak conscious memory, but a broad highway between conscious and subconscious. How can such an investigator divorce himself from his natural viewpoint enough to see such a sensitive as anything but unreliable and 'moonstruck'? Or the sensitive look on him as anything but destructive and bone-

headed? (It would be interesting to study the dreams of extreme examples of both groups. Would one achieve no more than flickers of verbal incoherence and the other 'live' in a dream-world of 'full-blooded' images?)

Take Mr Edmunds' legitimate comment that reasoned criticism of the evidential value of Miss Cummins' *Swan on a Black Sea* scripts 'has resulted in displays of emotionalism from some whose will to believe seems stronger than their desire for truth.' The moonlit might think him more objective had he also said that this seems equally true of those whose apparent will to disbelieve leads them to prefer, as a non-paranormal source for the scripts, the improbable hypothesis of lengthy and detailed indiscretion, against their own interests, on the part of intelligent persons known otherwise to be discreet.

Mr Edmunds says that he prefers not to comment on the parallel Fawcett scripts. The moonlit would ask, 'Why not? No one in their senses would doubt Miss Cummins' conscious integrity. At the same time it is well-known that automatic scripts are a mixed grill from many sources, and one of these seems to be unconscious memory. But since automatists are not aware of where their scripts come from, is this a crime? And why should the apparent source of one item in an avowedly mixed grill necessarily imply a similar source for all the others.'

Could a possible answer be here that the sunlit mind, whose way to the subconscious is perhaps overgrown with brambles, may be genuinely unable to *realise*, when faced with a specific case—even though he acknowledges the possibility in principle—that an automatist really had not known the source of her material and had entirely forgotten something she had once read? If so, he might well 'feel', even without being aware of it, that she had been consciously cheating, and this might emerge, unconsciously, in his writing.

Then, again, the investigator's tendency to concentrate on 'evidence' and ignore psychology annoys the moonlit. An elder statesman among scientists having said to me that one cannot evaluate a case of apparent psi without knowing its background, I enquired about the background of the Fawcett scripts and Miss Gibbes' notes on them, hoping that this might throw light on the weaknesses which Mr Edmunds has pointed out. The later scripts, I was told, were written during Miss Cummins' convalescence from a severe operation for cancer, and in order to please Miss Gibbes, who set great store by them and was gravely ill. Miss Gibbes died within two days of completing her notes. These circumstances may at least explain the lapses of memory if any by

both ladies which puzzled Mr Edmunds.

Perhaps, then, we can best profit from his pertinent comments by remembering their sunlit origin and supplementing them for ourselves. But he may have been led astray by too good a memory in 'expecting that if the scripts were in fact from the surviving Colonel Fawcett he would know something of Miss Gibbes and Miss Cummins'—because, like him, they had contributed articles to the *Occult Review*. I for one vaguely remember writing a certain article twenty years ago, but to save my life I couldn't remember its title or the names of other contributors to the review in which it appeared. Moreover, the changes of consciousness induced by hallucinogens have emphasized anew how incredibly hard it would be to be sure, from an investigator's standpoint, just what the nature, interests and memory might be of whatever part of man—if any—which survived the death of the body.

Quite a number of people combine some tendency towards being moonlit with a profound respect for sunlit brilliance. Perhaps I may speak for them in asking whether true objectivity might be brought nearer and thus research advanced, if we *all* made a practice, hard as it is, of trying to see, sometimes, with eyes unlike our own.

ROSALIND HEYWOOD

SIR,—With reference to the 'Explanatory Note' published at the end of Mr Simeon Edmunds's article 'An Automatic Script' in the *Journal* for March, I think some of your readers may well gain the erroneous impression that I instigated the writing of this article, which is not the case.

I first heard of the Fawcett articles through a friend, who told me that a third party had noticed the similarity between certain passages and one of the scripts in 'The Fate of Colonel Fawcett'. I only learnt recently that this was Mr J. R. Henderson, who is still unknown to me.

Having kept no note of the relevant issues of *The Occult Review* in which the Fawcett articles appeared, and being subsequently asked for this information by Miss Cummins, I requested Mr Edmunds to search through the volumes of *The Occult Review* published between the wars, and to let me know which dates were involved. I asked Mr Edmunds to do this because he has access to the set of volumes in the S.P.R. library, which I have not.

Some little time later he gave me this information and also showed me the article which he had written on the subject. Whereas I have no objections to the article, which is, I think, one